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Viewed in the light of a fair and just compensation for her undivided time and strenuous service, the stipend accorded her as a remuneration is considerably below the standard of a living wage with no definite prospect of advancement no matter how earnest her efforts may be.

The daily increasing consciousness that her discouraging and difficult position is not fully understood by her trustees, or worse still, is held as a matter of indifference, is leading to antagonism on her part, and a desire to promote her own advancement through other means than are now available.

This situation should be promptly met by the board, and every effort made to bring about a better and more sympathetic attitude from the staff. This can be done only by a broad, human understanding of the difficulties which alike confront both staff and trustees.

Will the board undertake a practical application, rather than an academic definition of the spirit of co-operation?

Will they put new life and hope into the working force of the library, at present disorganized on account of low salaries and other discouraging aspects?

Will they take the lead to which their position entitles them, and to which their training and experience as men of affairs pre-eminently fit them, in the pro-

motion and development of a more cordial spirit between themselves as trustees and the staff?

Will they attempt to reach the individual worker to the end that she may feel that her particular problems, her particular ambitions, are matters deserving attention and recognition?

If they will attempt this in all earnestness and sincerity, the "point of contact" will be discovered, the common ground found on which workers and trustees can meet and discuss staff problems, with a view to their solution.

The dawn of a new age is upon us; the hitherto inarticulate worker must be recognized and her claims adjudicated before humanity's tribunal.

It is democracy's great appeal, and if the world is to be made safe for the growth and development of that ideal, then we of our vast library system have resting upon us a most solemn responsibility.

Shall we rise to it, recognizing our work as part of the educational and fundamental forces of the world, the trustees indeed of enlightenment and moral force, or shall we, in arrogance and indifference, heed not the call, which the poet embodies so beautifully in these lines:

"Men my brothers, men the workers; ever
reaping something new,
That which they have done but earnest,
of the things that they shall do."

NOTES FROM LIBRARY WORK FOR THE BLIND

BY LIEUTENANT FRANK SCHOBLE

I think it is necessary to give you some of my reasons for bringing this subject to your attention. A man who finds himself in a new environment will take notice of his surroundings. If a man is transported as an immigrant to a new country, he will notice the condition of the people in that country and if, as in the case of the blind, they are unfortunate, he notices what is being done for them by the more fortunate neighbors. If he finds conditions can be improved, it devolves upon him to do everything in his power to improve these con-

ditions. Since the war the blinded soldiers have received an education and training which up to the time of the war was denied to civilians. When the blinded soldiers began returning from "over there," the work of their rehabilitation was begun. The whole country seemed to sympathize with us in our new condition and with the attempt to help us to place ourselves on our feet. Many people never before interested in work for the blind were interested in the work for the blind soldier.

When I consider the great benefits which *all* blind may receive from the help given to those blinded in the war, it is almost a privilege to be included in that number. The blind soldier has a new service to perform. We fought "over there," they tell us, to make the world a better place to live in for all mankind. We can transfer our service to the civilian blind who are now, since the passing of the war, our brothers and sisters. I do not want any of you to think that I am speaking as a group or for a group. I am not. As I told a reporter this afternoon, I am simply a blind soldier who, since the war, has his own problems to solve. Perhaps by putting them before you, I can help you to see that blindness is not so much a condition as an attitude. A few minutes ago I spoke of the greater interest taken in the soldier than in the civilian blind. However, the soldier and the civilian stand upon the same footing in their lack of reading material. A blind soldier can be trained to read, but of how much greater value that training would be if sufficient desirable books were available. He will want books to read when he gets out of service because, in many cases, he has come in contact with books for the first time in his life. Self-improvement will take the place of entertainment in his reading.

In continuing the work of education started in the schools, the libraries have done a wonderful work in this country, but there is still a great work to be done by libraries for the blind soldier. Many efforts have been made to improve the condition or alleviate the affliction of those disabled in the war. For the sake of the blind I want to add to the words "rehabilitate" and "reconstruct" the word "recreate" and all that it means. And while the blind are being given an opportunity to retake their place in industrial and social life to you will come an opportunity to re-create with books the world which their blindness has taken away from them. So that these will, in some measure, take the place of the sight which they have lost.

"A book is the gleam which lights the way out of darkness into day."

One of the soldiers at Evergreen told me that he never knew what a book meant until he lost his sight. I have read many letters written by the men at Evergreen and they all show an appreciation of books. Now in your Enlarged Program, as I understand it, you are going to try to bring the book to the reader and, in the arid regions, where books do not exist, you are going to establish libraries where they are needed. You are going to teach people that the library building in the public square, of which they are so proud, is for something more than to serve as a good background for a G. A. R. monument. You are going to make readers out of non-readers and make better readers out of those who already appreciate books.

In the 2,500 books printed for the blind six different kinds of type have been used. There are less than 100 books printed in the new type adopted as standard and of these your Association is responsible for a number. Credit is also due to some authors for brailleing their books.

The American public has not fully awakened to the needs of the blind. There is now a uniform type, but a brailled catalogue of books in this type is greatly needed by the blind man. He wants to read the catalog himself and decide what books to choose. If there is one thing a man wants to read for himself it is a book catalog. In a catalog a person will stumble upon a new title or a new author and it will probably lead him to make further explorations among books.

It is encouraging to know that the Association is so interested in the blind that it will include them in its Enlarged Program and provide so much money for the benefit of the blind. This will also encourage those working in their behalf and stimulate them to greater efforts. I do not know if you have ever thought of it in this way but I would like just to call your attention to the good you are doing in taking up this work. Your inclusion of

them in your program is giving them good advertising because you are bringing them before the public in a new way. The public does not understand the blind. They pity them and pass on or stop to drop a nickel in the cup. They do not see the blind worker in the factories, in business, and professional life. You are going to tell them that the blind are interested in life and education. They have the same desire for books and the same discrimination in their selection. It is not sufficient to supply the books. They must be distributed and circulated among the blind.

The expense of making the plates is so great that the commercial printing of books for the blind is almost an impossibility. A novel which you would buy for \$1.50 would cost probably \$10 in braille. As a usual thing the ordinary book runs from three to seven volumes in braille and costs from \$5 to \$10. Because of the cost and bulk of braille books it will be seen that the average man cannot possess many books. We have about forty libraries

which have departments for the blind and only about a dozen of them are keeping up with the supply.

Since taking up this work I have been asked by several people if it would not be better to leave the work to the established agencies for the blind. Libraries are public institutions with funds to be used for certain purposes, and this may not be considered. No one library could do anything in a general way for the whole country. As I understand it you are simply underwriting the cost of plates in production of books which will take the place of the commercial element.

Their tastes have not changed any since they lost their sight. They want the same books and they want them more than they ever wanted them before. But there aren't enough to go around and, consequently, the readers are being deprived of books. *What we need is more of everything so that some of us can get enough of something.* A frank, clear statement is all that is needed to get people's interest.

THE MODERN MEDUSA

By FREDERICK C. HICKS, *Law Librarian, Columbia University, New York City*

*"Index-learning turns no student pale,
Yet holds the eel of science by the tail."
Dunciad 1:279-80.*

In this often quoted couplet, Pope struck off two truths, a half-truth and a whole-truth. It may have been the fact in his time that a student who depended upon indexes was so freed from labor that he needed not to become pallid from overwork; but in this day and generation he may well lose color when he contemplates the vast array of material pointed out by the indexes. On the other hand, the passage of time and the accumulating wealth of literature makes it certain that only by index-learning can one grasp and hold the tail of the eel of science. Science cannot today be likened to a single eel wriggling and twisting to elude our grasp, but rather to a Medusa whose locks are formed by numerous eels of this and that science

and literature. Billings and Fletcher, armed with the *Index Medicus*, like Perseus of old, courageously attacked this dread creature, but they did not succeed in cutting off her head to place it on the shield of Athena, the Goddess of Wisdom. Their's was an unending battle which was taken up by Poole and another Fletcher, and which is carried on today by a host of combatants. The horrid locks still wave, but less violently since the attack has been joined by the *Readers Guide*, the *International Catalogue of Scientific Literature*, the agricultural, dramatic, industrial arts, military and psychological indexes, the *Public Affairs Information Service*, and the *Index to Legal Periodicals*.

The periodical literature of the world is less elusive today because of the self-sacrificing labors of men and women, some of whom are as mythological to the young-